

2016 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL MOUNTAIN C&H ALLOTMENT

INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Council Mountain C&H Allotment** for the 2016 grazing season. This plan was developed with participation of the livestock Permittees at the Annual Operating Instruction meeting held at the Council District Office on April 13, 2016. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock Permittees who participated in development of this plan were Permittees; Donna Yantis, Donna's guests Matt Armachost and Sarah Yantis, Matt Jones, Bill Copher, Jerry Yantis, Wes Hudman and his guest Ron Pixler and KAF Rider Steve Derrick, Idaho Department of Lands Resource Specialist Diane Green, Forest Service personnel; Fishery Biologist Trisha Giambra, Hydrologist Melanie Vining, Rangeland Management Specialists Andy Bumgarner & Jennifer McMorris, and District Ranger Greg Lesch.

These instructions are a guideline for grazing management. It is necessary to contact the Forest Service if there are any changes or additions to these instructions throughout the grazing season. Refer to Part 2 of your term grazing permit for general terms and conditions which apply to these Annual Operating Instructions.

Permitted Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	185cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Matt & Shannon Jones		75 cow/calf pairs	
KAF, LLC		179 cow/calf pairs	
		171 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		100 cow/calf pairs	
Mink Land & Livestock		243 cow/calf pairs	
Alvin or Nancy Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	
Jack & Donna Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Unallocated

Permitted Livestock Brands:


Copher, Bill & Cynthia -  LHC

Jones, Matt W & Shannon M -  RRC

KAF LLC -  LRC

Hudman, Wesley Jr & Kathie -  LSHC

Mink Land & Livestock Co. -  LHC

Yantis, Alvin or Nancy or Jerry -  RH

Yantis, Jack or Donna -  LHC

Permitted Pack & Saddle Stock

2016 Authorized Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	185 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Matt & Shannon Jones		75 cow/calf pairs	
KAF, LLC		79 cow/calf pairs 100 cow/calf pairs of non-use for personal convenience 171 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		90 cow/calf pairs 33 State Lease	
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	
Donna Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs	
Mink Land & Livestock		243 cow/calf pairs	6/18-10-13
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Unallocated

COMPLIANCE

This AOI is made part of the Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, item 3, and Part 2, item 8(a). Situations may develop during the grazing seasons which require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions. The season of use is especially dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation) which influences annual forage production and range readiness. The District Ranger's authority to modify term grazing permitted use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (b) & (c) of your permit.

Refer to your term grazing permit, part 2 (general terms and conditions) and part 3 (special terms and conditions) for a list of general and specific management practices required by the permittee.

All livestock feed or straw brought on to the forest is required to be certified weed free.

PREVIOUS YEAR GRAZING RESULTS

2015 Grazing Rotation			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	185 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Matt & Shannon Jones		75 cow/calf pairs	
KAF, LLC		54 cow/calf pairs 125 cow/calf pairs of non-use for resource protection 171 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		100 cow/calf pairs 23 State Lease	
Mink Land & Livestock		243 cow/calf pairs	
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	
Donna Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Unallocated

2015 Utilization			
Area	Date	Upland/Riparian	Percent Utilization
Filly Creek	7/6/15	Riparian	5%
Trestle Creek	7/6/15	Riparian	10%
Railroad Creek	7/6/15	Riparian	5%
Lower Beaver Creek	7/28/15	Riparian	13%
Contour Road	7/29/15	Upland	5%
East Fork Weiser River (near BT EX 2 & 3)	8/10/15	Riparian	15%
Dewey Creek (near BT EX 2 & 3)	8/10/15	Riparian	15%
Mill Creek	8/10/15	Riparian	15%
Shingle Flat	8/10/15	Upland	20%
Blue Bunch Ridge	8/27/15	Upland	15%
North Fork Cottonwood Creek (head waters)	9/30/15	Upland	69%
Little Salmon River	10/6/15	Upland	7%
Big Creek drainage	10/7/15	Riparian	19%
Upper E. Fk. Weiser River (Deseret Cabin)	10/14/15	Riparian	3%
Dewey Cr. Bull Trout Exclosure # 3	10/14/15	Riparian	6%
Wood Gulch	10/26/15	Upland Riparian	20% 15%
Bull Flat	11/5/15	Upland	70%
Granite Basin	11/5/15	Upland	91%
Lake Basin	11/5/15	Upland	86%

BILLING

Grazing fees of \$ 2.11/HM must be paid before livestock are authorized to enter the National Forest. Payment must be made to: USDA Forest Service, c/o Citibank, P.O. Box 301550, Los Angeles, California 90030-1550. The Council District Office must receive confirmation from the Citibank Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest. Permittees can now pay their bills with a credit card at Forest Service offices that have the Point of Sale System (POSS). Offices with the POSS on the Payette National Forest include Weiser, Council, New Meadows, and McCall Ranger Districts.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

The Council Mountain C&H Allotment is managed under a deferred rotation grazing system which was designed by the Forest Service and the Permittees to meet the requirements of the 1995 Council Mountain Allotment grazing decision. The rotations were designed to defer grazing above 6,000 feet elevation until July 15th and above 7,000 feet elevation until August 15th. This deferment is to occur at least one out of three years where it is applicable with in each individual use area. These grazing rotations are approximate and are based on annual weather conditions which affect indicators such as range readiness and seed ripe of grass species.

Cattle are to be removed from the allotment by October 15th each year. However, some cattle may start home by early September due to uncontrollable circumstances such as weather, wolves, recreation, and hunting. If this occurs and causes your livestock to be outside of their scheduled rotation please notify the Forest Service so that we can determine the best way to manage the situation.

The individual use areas are defined by drainages, ridgetops and natural boundaries. There are no structural divisions between the individual use areas; therefore, it is understood by the Forest Service and the Permittees that a small amount of drift is expected by cattle into neighboring use areas. If you feel that the drift is significant and needs to be dealt with please notify the Forest Service immediately so that the situation can be verified and dealt with promptly.

2016 Grazing Rotation			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Matt & Shannon Jones	Council Mountain	75 cow/calf pairs	
KAF, LLC		79 cow/calf pairs 100 cow/calf pairs of non-use for personal convenience 171 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		90 cow/calf pairs 28 State Lease	
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	
Donna Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs	
Mink Land & Livestock		243 cow/calf pairs	6/18-10-13
Bill Copher		185 cow/calf pairs	6/19-10/14

Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Unallocated
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Bill Copher: Cattle will turn out in North and South Mill Creek and move into the Frog Pond Area ranging between the East Fork Ditch and the ridge between South Mill Creek and Camp Creek. Approximately July 15th cattle will move up the Cold Springs Summit road grazing through the head of Cold Springs Creek into Dewey Creek. Approximately August 1st cattle will move out of Dewey Creek and start up Joker Creek. The cattle will be moved up Joker Creek and distributed on Blue Bunch Ridge between Blue Bunch Spring, Elsberry Spring and Four Corners. Approximately October 1st cattle will start back home. Some cattle will come home through Dewey Creek and back over Cold Springs Summit down South Mill Creek. Some cattle will come down the East Fork Weiser River through Shingle Flat and down the Mill Creek Ditch and off the forest.

Matt Jones: Turn out 60 pair on Beaver Creek and Fire Gulch and 15 pair on Filly Creek. The 60 pair will graze up Beaver Creek towards the North Fork of Beaver Creek. The 15 pair will graze towards Railroad Creek and Trestle Creek. Approximately July 20 both herds will come together in Beaver Creek and move into the North Fork of Beaver Creek and the lower portion of Dry Beaver Creek. Approximately August 1 the cattle will be moved to the Red Point and Blue Bunch areas. They will graze the area of Red Point to Blue Bunch Spring and North to the Forest Boundary. Approximately September 25 cattle will start moving back towards Beaver Creek, Pin Creek and Filly Creek Areas. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Hudman: Turn out in Gaylord and First, Second, Third, and Fourth Gulches. Cattle will graze this area until approximately July 15th cattle will move into Dry Beaver and work towards Blue Bunch Ridge and the State lease. They will graze this area from Blue Bunch Spring to the edge of the state lease section and the eastern forest boundary until approximately October 1st. Cattle will come home down Bench Creek, some will continue down to the East Fork Weiser River and off the forest and some will go over the top of the ridge at bench creek and come down Fourth Gulch to the East Fork Weiser River and off the forest by October 15th.

Alvin Yantis: On June 20th livestock will be turned out at Thompson Corner, they will remain in this area until once over utilization levels are met (40%). Between June 20th and approximately July 4th livestock will move easterly into the heads of Wood Gulch and Cookhouse Gulch staying on the North side of the ridge dividing the Middle Fork Weiser River Drainage from the Cottonwood Drainage. Approximately July 5th livestock will distribute into Cottonwood Basin. From here they will work their way up in elevation (based on range readiness) to the West side of Council Mountain still staying on the North side of the ridge dividing the Middle Fork Weiser River Drainage from the Cottonwood Drainage. The areas from Cottonwood Basin North (Log Cabin Gulch, Bull Flat and the head of Tamarack Gulch will be deferred until July 15th. After July 15th some cattle may be moved into this area. Approximately July 26th cattle will be moved over the mountain into Bucks Basin, Lake Basin, and Granite Basin where they will be distributed into Lower Granite Creek and Dead Ox until utilization levels are met (50%). At this time some livestock may cross the North side of the ridge dividing the Middle Fork Weiser River Drainage from the Cottonwood Drainage to gain access to the Basins mentioned above. No salt will be placed in Granite Basin, Lake Basin or Bucks Basin. The Basins received deferment past August 15th in the 2014 grazing rotation. Livestock will then start back home through Granite, Lake and

Bucks Basins over the top into Cottonwood Creek and Cookhouse Gulch. Cattle will be removed at Thompson Corner by October 15th.

Donna Yantis: Turn cattle out on Fort Hall Ridge. Approximately June 27th move easterly towards Shingle Flat through Cutoff Saddle and over Cold Springs Saddle. Approximately July 4th move into the headwaters of Dewey Creek. Cattle will remain in the Dewey Creek drainage until approximately August 1st. Cattle will move across the East Fork Weiser River drainage into Squaw Flat and Armistead Creek and will graze this area until approximately October 1st. Cattle will return home the same route.

Mink Land & Livestock: Cattle will be turned out between Bar and Boulder Creeks grazing into the Cabin Creek area. They will graze this area until Approximately July 10th. Cattle will then graze into the area of White Licks, Crystal Creek, lower end of Lake Creek and Bucks Basin. Approximately September 25 cattle will start home through Cabin Creek to the Middle Fork. Some cattle will go up Warm Springs Creek to Sheep Creek and then back to the Middle Fork and off the Allotment by October 15th.

KAF, LLC: Cattle will turn out in Lester Creek and use Cool Creek, Grossen Creek, and Camp Creek drainages. The area will be utilized until approximately July 15. Cattle will then proceed up North Fork Cottonwood Creek and cross over the top of the ridge into the head waters of Dewey Creek and the East Fork of the Weiser River. Cattle will be moved through this area for approximately two weeks between July 15th and August 1st. Cattle will then work towards No Business moving through the East Fork, past the exclosures through Squaw Flat and over to the No Business area. Cattle will remain in the area of Squaw Flat, Elsberry Spring, the eastern forest boundary, and No Buisness Lookoout until approximately October 1st. Cattle will return home through Squaw Flat over the ridge into the head waters of the East Fork and Dewey Creek then over the ridge into the North Fork Cottonwood Creek to the gravel pit and then down the ridge and the Cotton Wood road to Lester Creek and off the Forest by October 15. On drought years where the ditch does not hold water until July 15th it may be necessary to move cattle earlier. If this occurs the next grazing season will be used as the deferment year.

Notify the Forest Service 5 days before you turn onto the allotment of when and where turnout will occur so that a count can be made if desired.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

The grazing prescriptions are designed to meet the resource needs of the soils and vegetation. For drainages which support habitat for the Chinook Salmon (threatened species under the Endangered Species Act), it is necessary to develop prescriptions that eliminate any adverse impacts to the salmon habitat. Fisheries Biologists will complete Biological Assessments on this grazing activity to ensure that any known and/or potential effects have been eliminated. The known or potential problem areas have been identified below, along with the respective mitigation measures designed to eliminate each adverse effect.

1. Resource Concerns: Little Salmon River drainage in T18N R2E sec. 31, Vick Creek drainage in T18N R1E sec. 22 above the Forest boundary and Big Creek drainage along Blue Bunch Ridge in T17N R2E sec. 5, 8, 17, 21 and 27.

Mitigation Measures:

1. Maintain an allowable use of 40% in the uplands.
2. Maintain an allowable use of 30% in riparian areas.
3. Adjust grazing practices as necessary to maintain or improve inland and anadromous fish resources and fish habitat.
4. Assure that existing facilities within RCAs do not prevent or retard attainment of WCIs.
5. Limit livestock trailing, bedding, watering, salting, loading, and other handling to those areas and times that will not prevent or retard attainment of WCIs.
6. Salt is not to be placed in meadow bottoms, where livestock congregate and should be placed no less than 0.25 miles from water.

The following standards apply to the East Fork Weiser River and Dewey Creek Bull trout spawning areas. Written in the August 28, 2008 Council Mountain and Indian Mountain Allotments Amendment to the Biological Assessment for the Weiser River Watershed, utilization standards will be changed from the 1999 Biological Opinion (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1999) inside and outside of the exclosures to match the Payette Forest Plan standard (RAST01) of 45% utilization in riparian areas.*

*The standard being replaced is “residual stubble heights within riparian areas shall be at least 6 inches for key representative riparian graminoid species (grasses, rushes, sedges, etc.) at the time cattle are removed from a unit. No more than 30% use by weight on upland type grasses which occur on floodplains or no more than 40% use where stream temperatures are functioning adequately shall be permitted. No more than 25% of the annual growth (i.e., of current season’s leaders, not existing plant material) of woody species shall be browsed. Permitted utilization levels may differ from these levels if restoration to acceptable conditions is necessary for a given riparian site.”

The following are specific utilization standards and guidelines from the July 2003 Forest Plan. Utilization percentages are by weight and are the maximum allowed.

RAST01 - Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

a) Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4 inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.

b) Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures – 50 percent use.

In cattle allotments where riparian area restoration is an objective (Upper East Fork Weiser River subwatershed, Beaver Creek), grazing systems should be designed to incorporate the following parameters where appropriate (RAGU02):

a. Provide residual vegetative cover (at least 6 inches of hydric vegetation) either through regrowth or rest treatments for at least 75 percent of the years in a rotation cycle.

b. Reduce the duration of riparian area grazing periods where needed. Grazing period reduction may be especially needed in the fall where riparian deciduous woody species are an important riparian vegetation component.

- c. Design grazing periods to take advantage of favorable seasonal livestock dispersal behavior (examples: spring use of uplands, due to wet riparian conditions, late fall upland use, due to cold temperatures, poor dispersal during “hot” season).
- d. Incorporate sufficient growing season rest to provide good vigor, physiological needs, and regeneration of all riparian plants.
- e. Where deciduous trees and shrubs are important in the composition, modify the frequency of grazing periods, reduce the grazing duration, or reduce grazing intensity to levels that provide for recovery/maintenance of healthy diverse trees and shrubs.

East Fork Weiser River and Middle Fork Weiser River are listed on the Idaho State 303(d) impaired water quality list and has been identified in the Forest Plan in the Management Area 3 Weiser River Objective 0318 for improvement of water quality. **Please be aware, on these two rivers you are required to maintain a 6 inch residual stubble height on hydric greenline species to be measured at the end of the growing season, not the end of the grazing season.**

When an area reaches allowable use levels the cattle will be moved and kept from returning to that area. If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in the authorized grazing activity will occur. If proper utilization levels are reached, then livestock will be moved to the next grazing area or off the forest. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions, then the Forest Service policy and procedures dealing with administrative permit actions will be followed.

Livestock in units outside the season of use or on an allotment other than the one permitted, is a violation of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. The Forest Service recognizes that a 100% clean pasture or allotment is not always achievable by the scheduled move or off date however; adequate effort is expected on the Permittees part to achieve that.

IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the use area scheduled for turn out. Some improvements may not be accessible by turnout because of snow levels or elevation. If this occurs notify your rangeland management specialist. If an existing range improvement has been properly maintained but requires reconstruction, a cooperative effort can be made between the Forest Service and permittee to reconstruct the development, depending on material availability. Those projects to which the permittee contributes normally receive higher priority for funding by the Forest Service.

Maintenance of spring developments is vitally important to effective livestock dispersal within the grazing allotment. If you are aware of spring developments that require reconstruction or extensive maintenance, please discuss this with your Rangeland Management Specialist prior to starting any work.

The Permittees are required to have their bull trout fences set up, maintained and fully functional by August 15th each year. They are also required to ride the bull trout spawning habitat

exclosures twice per week to maintain, repair, keep cattle out of and/or remove cattle from. The Permittees are responsible for these exclosures. The minimum charge recommended by the fence charger manufacturer for detouring animals is 2,000 volts. This will be the minimum standard for charges on the Bull Trout fence exclosures. All parties recognize that tester readings can have large ranges of differences in measurements.

The Shingle Flat exclosure has been rebuilt as originally designed. Until the Permittees set it up, maintain it, and let it down, **no livestock use is authorized.**

For a list of assigned maintenance of structural improvements as well as maintenance standards see part 3 of your term grazing permit.

PERMITTEE/RIDER INSTRUCTIONS

Part of good cattle management is riding to assure proper cattle distribution. In particular we want to insure that the stream banks and meadows aren't over used. These riparian areas are considered key areas and will be monitored. When an area has reached maximum allowable use levels cattle will be removed from that area and kept from returning. Keeping cattle off select areas and in areas of less use serves to prolong the time cattle can expect to stay in an area.

If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms. Exceptions to this must be cleared and approved by the District Ranger prior to placing the salt.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from open roads and out of sight from roads if possible.
- Should be located in a rocky area where minimal vegetation grows.
- Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.
- ¼ mile from timber plantations with trees less than 15 feet tall. If this can't be accomplished, the District Range and Reforestation personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations.

REQUIRED REPORTING

We are requiring you to report actual use information for each unit grazed because we are required to report this grazing use to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This information is also very important when conducting future allotment analysis. Any format is acceptable. If you would like a Forest Service form or have any questions about what information to include in the Actual Use Report, please call Andy at 208-253-0114 or 208-549-4262. **Actual Use needs to be turned in no later than December 31, 2016.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Turnout will not occur prior to range readiness. Range readiness is measured by soil moisture and plant growth. Soils may be damp but should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock.

Perennial grass species must be a minimum of 6 inches in height. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom.

Allotment/pasture inspections will be performed periodically throughout the grazing season by Forest Service Personnel. Livestock distribution, correct livestock location, numbers and identification, structural improvement maintenance, and utilization levels will be evaluated during these site visits. If you wish to accompany Forest Service Personnel on these inspections please contact the Rangeland Management Specialist.

COORDINATION & COOPERATION

Cooperation with neighboring Permittees is encouraged, however if there are problems occurring that cannot be settled let your Rangeland Management Specialist know so that steps can be taken to correct the problems.

In accordance with Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2255.1 all grazing Permittees are required to conform to livestock laws and quarantine regulations of the State and Secretary of Agriculture while their livestock are on Forest Service administered land. Forest officers shall not allow livestock under quarantine to enter Forest Service administered lands until the quarantine is lifted or until the hold order is released. Grazing permits may be suspended or cancelled, in accordance with FSM 2204, for failure to comply with such laws or with any approved special rules of a recognized livestock association.

All bulls required by Idaho state law to be trichomoniasis (trich) tested shall have a current trich test prior to entering Forest Service lands. Bulls that are to be turned out on public grazing allotments are required to be tested for Trichomoniasis by April 15 of each Trichomoniasis testing season or forty-five (45) days prior to turnout on a public grazing allotment, whichever occurs first. All bulls will be trich tagged for the current trich year prior to entering Forest Service lands.

Please review the AOI for consistency with our discussion at the annual meeting, if correct sign and return it to Andy.

GREG LESCH
District Ranger

DATE

Bill Copher
Permittee

DATE

Mink Land & Livestock
Permittee

DATE

Matt & Shannon Jones
Permittee

DATE

KAF, LLC Kim Astle
Permittee

DATE

Wes Hudman
Permittee

DATE

Alvin Yantis
Permittee

DATE

Donna Yantis
Permittee

DATE